

Story County Development Plan

Land Use Framework

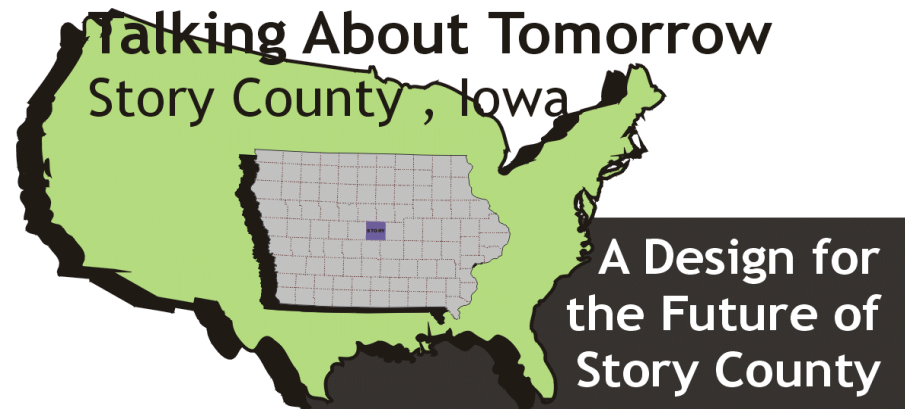
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The *Story County Development Plan* has been developed by the Board of Supervisors, Planning and Zoning Commission, *County Development Plan* Steering Committee, Story County Planning and Zoning Department, a professional planning consulting team, and the residents of Story County, Iowa. The *County Development Plan* is made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated development in the unincorporated areas of Story County, which will, in accordance with the existing and future needs, best promote the general welfare of the citizens of Story County, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. As such, the *County Development Plan's* vision and goals, principles, guiding objectives and implementation recommendations are intended to be used as a framework to guide decisions regarding land use, as well as related areas such as transportation and streets, economic development, public facilities, infrastructure and other physical development items.

The Legal Authority for Planning

Story County, Iowa, is authorized to regulate land use and development through its right to zone in accordance with a comprehensive plan under the Code of Iowa Chapter 335.5. Additionally, there is authority granted to counties to do land use planning per Chapter 352 of the Code,



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addressing agricultural preservation and the right to farm. Within the context of this authority, the Story

County Board of Supervisors and Planning and Zoning Commission created the *County Development Plan* to guide land use and development activities in unincorporated Story County.

Nature and Purpose of the *County Development Plan*

The *County Development Plan* is an advisory document, intended to be amended over time as conditions and/or county preferences change. It is designed to guide the county's day-to-day activities within the context of a long-range future vision. Toward this end, the *County Development Plan*:

- **IS LONG-RANGE:** Long-range means that the Plan looks forward to the year 2020, attempting to provide for the future needs of the county insofar as possible to make reasonable projections and judgments.
- **IS GENERAL:** The term "general" means that the *Plan* outlines a desirable future development framework by showing the general location, character and extent of physical development and the relationship of those elements.
- **FOCUSES ON PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:** Physical development issues are those involving the coordination of basic building blocks of the built and natural environment, such as infrastructure, streets, land use, public facilities, topography, and habitat.

- **CLEARLY RELATES IDENTIFIED ISSUES AND GOALS TO PROPOSED PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** A plan can exhibit all of the characteristics listed above, but it will not be useful if the recommended actions contained in the plan do not directly address community goals and issues. The principles and guidelines recommended in the *Story County Development Plan* are intended first and foremost to serve as a guide to decision-making and to provide continuity in addressing land use and development issues.

The Planning Process

The participants involved in Story County's planning process followed a rational sequence of steps to create this plan. Such a process relies not only on the expertise of professional staff, but also on the input of experts from other fields, members of elected and appointed boards and commissions, representatives of various community interest groups and county residents at-large.

The planning process began with the development of the *Story County Land Use and Growth Management Vision Project*, commonly referred to as the *Wallace House Report*. This report provides the foundation for the *County Development Plan*. As part of the Wallace House process, county participants reached consensus on shared values and concerns for future land use and related issues in Story County. Participants also suggested some general solutions and strategies for addressing those values and concerns.

To build on this foundation, technical data was collected and an analysis of the data was conducted by the planning team. Additionally, a number of strategic planning workshops were held to verify the findings of the Wallace House Report and to clarify a vision and goals from residents regarding the future development of Story County.

In addition to the data gathering, data analysis, and public input efforts, alternative futures were evaluated to define a framework to move from existing conditions to desired goals for the future. Whereas technical data and participant involvement provided the basis for the "Vision and Goals" and the "Land Use Framework" sections of the *County Development Plan*, the "Plan Implementation" section provides guidance for the County's future decisions and actions.



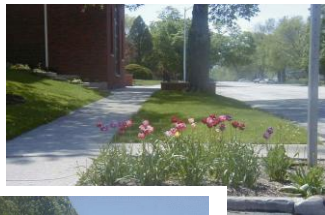


CHAPTER TWO

VISION AND GOALS

Story County Development Plan Vision

The core premise embedded in the *County Development Plan* is to maintain and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the county during times of change and to promote the ideals and values of county residents as changes occur. The *County Development Plan* identifies the physical factors that make Story County unique. The *Plan* is a combination of practicality and vision and provides guidance for sustaining the physical qualities that characterize Story County.



The *County Development Plan* VISION is to provide and protect the Quality of Life Assets that make Story County and all the communities in it, a vibrant, sustainable place to live and work. The Quality of Life Assets features in Story County are:

- A rural/small town lifestyle with easy access to urban amenities.
- A crime-free, congestion-free community where hard-working residents have access to good jobs, good schools, and good housing.
- Abundant and accessible clean air and water, and productive, fertile soil.
- Honest, accessible and responsible public officials who facilitate the planned, orderly growth and development of the county.



Story County Development Plan Goals

The *County Development Plan* goals are the pillars that support the vision. Every goal is made of building blocks that, when implemented, form the basis for the desired quality of life in Story County. These goals set the stage for the development of the Land Use Framework principles, map categories, and guiding objectives presented in the next chapter.

The goals for the *County Development Plan* Are:

Protect and preserve Story County's agricultural resources.

- Identify and preserve productive agricultural land for continued agricultural use.
- Implement planning policies to protect farms and farmers from urban influences that inhibit agricultural practices.
- Encourage value-added agricultural practices that support sustainable economics.

Protect and preserve Story County's natural resources.

- Identify, preserve, and expand critical natural areas, greenbelts, and open space.
- Identify methods for improving and protecting water and air quality.
- Implement planning policies to protect and preserve sensitive natural areas and open space.

Promote and improve the mobility of Story County residents.

- Implement a county-wide transportation plan.

Foster cooperation and collaboration between rural and urban residents and public and private enterprises that enhances the Quality of Life Assets in Story County.

- Maintain and enhance the high-quality system of education.
- Promote cooperation on economic development efforts to retain and attract businesses.
- Facilitate local government coordination of emergency services.
- Implement cooperative planning efforts among local governments to ensure orderly and efficient development at the fringes of Story County communities to minimize potential urban-rural conflicts.



CHAPTER THREE

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Principles and Objectives

Every built and natural element of any environment may contribute to or detract from the character and function of that environment. The Land Use Framework for Story County contains many such distinct land areas differentiated by their unique character and function. The Interim Land Use Framework in this chapter guides future land use planning decisions in unincorporated areas of Story County. It establishes **principles** that further the **vision and goals** for Story County.

These **principles** translate to the future, **Interim Land Use Framework Map**, a graphic depiction of these areas with distinct character and function. The Interim Land Use Framework Map serves as a simplified diagram of the direction in which Story County may develop through 2020. The Framework includes the following categories:

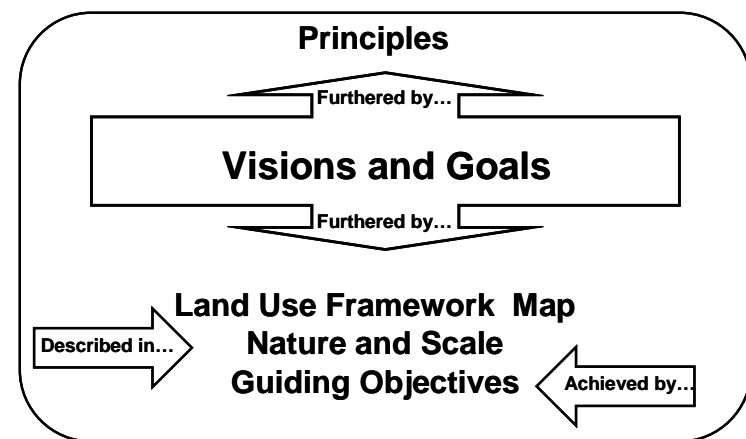
- AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION AREAS;
- NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS;
- TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM;
- COOPERATIVE PLANNING AREAS;
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS; AND
- MIXED USED AREAS.

While each of the categories may include a variety of land uses and zoning districts and distinct implementation mechanisms, they are all shown in a general manner on the Interim Land Use Framework Map. By providing overarching guidance, the Interim Land Use Framework Map and associated principles and guiding objectives establish the patterns and nature of how those land uses occur and interact.

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Each category on the Interim Land Use Framework Map is distinct in that each creates its own unique and engaging environment, where each natural or built element reinforces and intensifies an overall character of the area. However, all the categories are interrelated, as policies and actions in one area inevitably impact the effectiveness of policies in other more remote areas.

Implementation of these principles, achieving the desired overarching characteristics, dictates the pattern and nature of how various land uses occur and interact within each category. The guiding principles in the Interim Land Use Framework must be used in conjunction with specific implementation tools and policies as development occurs and land use decisions are made over time.



Agricultural Conservation Areas

Principles

Over 90% of the unincorporated land area of Story County is used for agriculture and nearly 80% of the land area, according to USDA definitions, is classified as “high value” agricultural land. The vast majority of undeveloped land in unincorporated Story County is prime agricultural land with regard to soil productivity, topography, rural character, availability of agricultural support services, and isolation from incompatible land uses. Preservation and enhancement of prime agricultural land has long been a priority in Story County. Existing federal and state policies recognize prime agricultural land as a national resource to be protected. Farming operations are important economic and historic elements in the county and are critical to the quality of life of county residents.



The following principles regarding Story County’s agricultural resources are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

- Principle 1:** Conserving agricultural land and practices is a fundamental and enduring principle in Story County. Areas are identified, conserved, and enhanced throughout the county for farming and agricultural production.
- Principle 2:** Farm and agricultural operations are vital to the economy of the region. To provide economic opportunities for the agricultural community, accessory home businesses are encouraged and permitted and fair standards for such uses established.
- Principle 3:** In cooperation with communities, areas are reserved for future growth of incorporated communities within the two-mile shared planning areas of those communities, balancing the need for growth with conservation of areas for continued agricultural uses.
- Principle 4:** Areas for development are designated to limit conflicts between agricultural uses and rural residences and other land uses. Development practices preserve and protect prime agricultural lands and the ability to engage in agricultural practices.

Nature and Scale

Farming and agricultural production is the predominant characteristic of Agricultural Conservation Areas. All other non-agricultural land uses are ancillary and mainly support the continued use of these areas for farming and agricultural production, or support those residents within these areas whose livelihoods depend on farming and agricultural industry employees, Non-agricultural

commercial uses are generally clustered in central locations to be accessible to farms and residences they support so as not to interfere with farm operations within the area nor to materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern in the area. Roads are generally designed for low capacity and speeds, primarily in support of farming activities.

Edges of Agricultural Conservation Areas, or edges of non-agricultural uses within Agricultural Conservation Areas, are maintained to stabilize the agricultural areas and minimize conflicts with non-agricultural uses. Land uses and designs that transition from agricultural scale and nature to non-agricultural scale and nature define these edges. Developments requiring large public or private infrastructure expenditures to handle projected traffic and service capacity by the development are not appropriate in these areas.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: Story County will continue to foster land use policies and regulations which conserve the productivity and preserve the availability of high value agricultural lands for the production of food and fiber and seek to reduce potential conflicts between development and agricultural practices.

Objective 2: The planning process will promote the continued health of agriculture through voluntary, incentive-based programs and strategies, identifying potential partners to facilitate the creation and existence of such programs.

Objective 3: Factors will be identified and used in determining the relative priority given to conservation of a particular piece of ground for continued agricultural use.

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Natural Resource Areas

Principles

Clean air, clean water, open spaces, native prairie areas, mature trees and fertile soil all contribute to the quality of life in

Story County. Privately-owned natural areas, floodplains, green spaces, and parks help create open space linkages between the countryside and communities. The Land Use Framework



identifies the natural features in the county, commits to preserving unique and sensitive habitats, and fosters integration of natural systems into the planning process.



The following principles regarding Story County's natural resources are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

Principle 1: The county's natural resources-wetlands, native prairies, and stream (riparian) corridors are key indicators of the ecological health of Story County. These natural resources are identified, conserved and enhanced.

Principle 2: Strategies are developed that are designated to protect Story County's natural resources.

Principle 3: Unique threatened and endangered species, habitats, and wildlife corridors in the county are identified, conserved, and enhanced.

Principle 4: A comprehensive review of floodplain development policies is completed, coordinating with hazard mitigation planning activities to limit potential conflicts between development and impacts to watersheds and water bodies.

Principle 5: Aquifers, water bodies and associated well fields are primary drinking resources for Story County. Water resources are identified and protected from pollution or degradation.

Principle 6: Development areas are designated to limit potential conflicts with sensitive environmental features and identified natural resources.

Nature and Scale

The possible short and long-term effects resulting from the alteration of Story County's natural areas and rural landscapes—specifically from urbanization and development infrastructure improvement, and agricultural land uses—concerns citizens of Story County. Natural Resource Areas define the approximate boundaries of areas identified as hydrologically-sensitive areas, flood hazard areas, soils with severe limitations for development purposes, areas of existing woodland vegetation and areas with severe slopes and potential for erosion. Continual identification, conservation and enhancement of Natural Resource Areas is necessary to preserve the quality of life for Story County residents.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: Strategies will be undertaken to seek to preserve and enhance the natural resource areas of Story County.

Objective 2: Proposed development within areas identified as Natural Resource Areas will be discouraged.

Objective 3: Proposed development contiguous to areas identified as Natural Resource Areas will mitigate impacts of development.

Objective 4: Close coordination of Story County regulations and active identification of resources and land use planning on a watershed basis will be undertaken in cooperation with other agencies to help reduce negative impacts to water resources.

Objective 5: Areas with the greatest diversity of vegetation species and forms, offering a variety of needed food and cover are limited in Story County. Areas which support the greatest wildlife populations and have the greatest species diversity will be protected. Wetland habitat will be encouraged in areas where soil characteristics and drainage indicate locations of past marshes or prairie potholes.

Objective 6: Aggregate resources in Story County are minimal. Policies will be established to ensure preservation and protection of the county's deposits from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Objective 7: Efforts will be undertaken to accurately identify floodplain boundaries in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Transportation System

Principles

Mobility-the means by which we get from home to work, to school, to play-is an essential ingredient in the quality of life in Story County. A transportation system that uses the full array of transportation modes-roads, sidewalks, trails, transit, railroad, and airports-is critical to providing for the mobility of the county residents and maintaining the easy access county residents have to urban and rural amenities.



The following principles regarding Story County's transportation system are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

Principle 1: A county-wide transportation plan is developed by Story County in cooperation with each community to identify county-wide priorities.

Principle 2: Transportation resources in Story County, including Interstate 35, US Highways 30, 65, and 69, state highways, the historic Lincoln Highway, major railroads, airports, recreational trails and streams are identified and plans developed addressing future land uses.

Principle 3: The County's transportation resources are built into economic development strategies of the county and communities.

Principle 4: Impacts of the transportation system on natural resources and agricultural lands are minimized.

Nature and Scale

Certain areas within unincorporated Story County are served by levels of transportation infrastructure ideal for certain types of agribusiness, industrial and rural employment opportunities. While it is most appropriate for many types of development to occur in an urban setting provided with urban amenities, unique services and industries that support agricultural and/or rural or small town development and stabilization may be more appropriately located in the unincorporated areas.

Transportation nodes – such as areas where rail intersects rail, or two highways intersect – indicate locations that are uniquely positioned to receive and distribute goods and services. Development near these nodes may be appropriate where the development is logical and consistent with adopted planning policies of the County and adjacent communities when nodes fall within Cooperative Planning Areas. The

County Development Plan recognizes that the County's transportation resources offer opportunities to provide services for commercial, industrial, and agribusiness development that may not be feasible or logical within urban areas.

The *County Development Plan* also recognizes that rail transportation is a critical component of economic stability and growth in Story County. The major rail corridors of the county are emphasized on the Interim Land Use Framework Map and are given special consideration in land use decisions. Incorporated into decision-making processes regarding proposed development within the corridors are: the impact of rail activity on the development; the impact of the development upon rail activity; and, the degree to which continued or expanded levels of rail activity is facilitated by the development. The rail corridors are given high priority in a county-wide transportation plan.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: New development will mitigate impacts to existing infrastructure and not exceed adequate levels of service standards.

Objective 2: Development will be located on a case-by-case basis. It will not be located in designated floodplain, wetlands, or native prairie areas.

Objective 3: Proposed developments will be designed to reduce conflicts between development and agricultural and natural resources and maintain the open character of rural areas or of a community if located adjacent to a community.

Objective 4: Development adjacent to agricultural uses shall provide adequate buffers to minimize conflicts and complaints concerning standard agricultural practices.

Objective 5: New development will be located within accepted public service areas for time and/or distance for delivery of emergency services.

Cooperative Planning Areas

Principles

The *County Development Plan* and regulations of Story County apply to unincorporated land in Story County. As allowed by the Code of Iowa, the municipalities in Story County also have subdivision authority extending two miles beyond their corporate boundaries. Generally, communities plan for the future of land within their incorporated limits, extending only limited distances beyond these established boundaries. Planning around the communities (outside their official city limits, but within two-miles) cannot simply be completed by Story County. Detailed land uses, principles, practices and, ultimately, perhaps regulations are needed for these areas to help guide development in a manner appropriate for the continued survival of the community.



The *Story County Development Plan* recognizes, encourages and supports cooperative planning between Story County and its communities in these unique areas. On the Interim Land Use Framework Map, Cooperative Planning Areas are identified around each community and the *Plan* identifies that fringe area studies are to be completed, detailing future land uses for the cooperative planning areas and identifying shared planning directions between Story County and the community. Until such time that detailed fringe area studies are completed, the Cooperative Planning Areas are supplemented by the land use plans of each community to the extent that such plans extend beyond city limits. On an interim basis, the future land uses identified on these city plans and the accompanying policies, goals, and objective guide development in the Cooperative Planning Areas. Story County staff and decision-makers interpret and apply city plan provisions in consultation with city officials when necessary.

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Tiers are established in the Cooperative Planning Areas based on the distance from the incorporated areas within the county. Each tier provides a level of progressively developable land,



with greater preference given in closer proximity to cities, in which the county's growth needs may be accommodated when all the principles of the *County Development Plan* are met. Principles of tier development are applied only when the area under consideration is not supplemented by a city land

use plan.

The following principles regarding Story County's cooperative planning efforts are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

- Principle 1:** Fringe Area Studies and appropriate implementation mechanisms are collaboratively developed.
- Principle 2:** Areas for future growth of cities are identified and reserved, applying appropriate growth management practices. These are typically within the two-mile shared planning areas of the communities.
- Principle 3:** New commercial, residential and industrial development is supported within incorporated areas and areas where infrastructure exists and extensions are logical.
- Principle 4:** Development adjacent to agricultural uses provides adequate buffers to minimize conflicts and complaints concerning standard agricultural practices.

Principle 5: Through the use of intergovernmental agreements, professional planning services are shared with all local governments in the county.

Principle 6: Until Fringe Area Studies are adopted, development proposals within Cooperative Planning Areas are allotted additional preference depending on the proximity tier within which they are located. Proposals are given the greatest preference within Tier One. Tier designations compliment case-by-case analysis of development proposals with regard to the other principles and objectives of the Cooperative Planning Areas.

Principle 7: Until Fringe Area Studies are adopted, city land use plans, policies, goals and objective are implemented where available within the Cooperative Planning Areas by the County staff and decision-makers in consultation with the applicable city.

Nature and Scale

Urban land uses are generally preferred within municipal boundaries where urban levels of service are available; however, development does occur in the unincorporated areas of Story County. Story County does not provide urban services for rural development; however, rural development has been occurring utilizing “non-urban” services-on-site wastewater treatment systems, private wells and rural water systems, and gravel roads. Generally, rural development when it does occur is located within two miles of incorporated limits, using these “non-urban” services. Communities are impacted by these rural residential uses, though, through indirect means-more individuals using library services, additional traffic on roadways, use of parks and trails, and others.

The Cooperative Planning Areas are divided into three tiers based on their distance from incorporated areas:

Tier One – 0-1/4 mile from city limits

Tier Two - 1/4 to 3/4 mile from city limits and quarter-sections with low to moderate agricultural land.

Tier Three - 3/4 mile to two miles from city limits.

For each community, the Land Use Framework Map illustrates the boundaries of the Cooperative Planning Areas. Land uses within these areas will be identified through the development of specific fringe area plans. As developing areas, Cooperative Planning Areas may be characterized by agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use development, subject to the mutual planning goals of Story County and in the communities.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: Story County will work with communities to develop Fringe Area Studies for the land within the identified Cooperative Planning Areas consistent with the goals and objectives of the communities and Story County.

Objective 2: New urban development will be encouraged within communities or within appropriately planned locations.

Objective 3: Agricultural lands and character of agricultural community will be preserved where feasible and desirable, recognizing that prime agricultural land and viable farming operations are as likely to be found within Cooperative Planning Areas as elsewhere in the county.

Objective 4: New urban-density residential uses will locate only in areas specifically designed for urban development, including Cooperative Planning Areas. Commercial and Industrial uses will also locate only in urban areas except where uses have specific requirements which justify their location in rural areas.

Rural Residential Areas

Principles

The *County Development Plan* recognizes that existing residential land uses in rural areas provide a desirable segment of the housing market that is worthy of protection and cultivation.

The following principles regarding Story County's Rural Residential Areas are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

Principle 1: New development within Rural Residential Areas is sensitive to the predominantly rural nature of the areas.

Principle 2: Innovative projects that effectively minimize development impacts on adjacent agricultural and natural landscapes with seamless transitions from non-agricultural uses to agricultural and natural landscapes are encouraged.

Principle 3: Conflicts between land uses in rural and agricultural areas are minimized.

Nature and Scale

Rural Residential Areas offer the rural housing market segment choices in the unincorporated areas of the county. Rural Residential Areas are characterized primarily by residential land uses adapted for a rural or agricultural setting at low, non-urban densities. Urban level services are not provided in these areas, and these are not priority areas for infrastructure development, such as roads, utilities, parks or other services. Any commercial land uses that occur in Rural Residential Areas are clustered at a central location accessible

to the residences they support; primarily serving the needs of residents within that area, not relying on markets beyond the rural road network.

Edges of Rural Residential Areas transition to the agricultural and natural landscapes that surround these areas to stabilize and minimize conflicts among land uses. Cluster development, rural villages, or conservation subdivisions are effective development techniques to stabilize edges and minimize conflicts. Impacts to transportation networks are minimized by design concepts, density manipulations, or privately-funded infrastructure improvements.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: In identified Rural Residential Areas, allowed uses and residential densities will be based on the current zoning of the property. The maximum number of allowed dwelling units in new rural subdivisions will be determined by the minimum lot size of the zoning district of the developable portions of the property and changes in existing zoning will be approved only when the change supports rural uses and maintains the open character of the rural area.

Objective 2: Proposed subdivisions in Rural Residential Areas will be located on a case-by-case basis. Location guidelines will be established and used in the approval process for new rural subdivisions within Rural Residential Areas.

Objective 3: Design and development standards will be established to reduce conflicts between proposed development and agricultural and natural resources. New residential development will be designed to maintain the open character of rural areas and to protect and maintain agricultural uses and sensitive environmental features.

Objective 4: Development adjacent to agricultural uses will provide adequate buffers to minimize conflicts with agricultural practices.

Mixed Use Areas

Principles

The *County Development Plan* recognizes that existing mixed use areas are unique land use patterns that provide valued and established services for citizens in Story County. The following principles regarding Story County's Mixed Use Areas are fundamental to the Land Use Framework:

Principle 1: Opportunities to improve or stabilize these areas are cultivated.

Principle 2: The impact of mixed use areas on adjacent agricultural lands and natural landscapes with seamless transitions from non-agricultural and natural landscapes is minimized.

Principle 3: Conflicts between land uses in rural and agricultural areas are minimized.

Nature and Scale

Mixed use areas are characterized by a variety of land uses existing in one location—often due to unplanned circumstances. These are areas with existing residential platted lots – some with homes from older housing stock, other vacant, yet appropriate for future development. Roads in these areas are generally platted as right-of-way, maintained by Story County. The uses are served by private wastewater treatment systems (septic) and private water sources – wells and rural water systems. As shown on the Land Use Framework, these areas contain the rural villages of Iowa Center, Shipley, and Fernald.

These areas provide valued services for adjacent areas. Future development, infrastructure, and services in these

areas focus on minimizing impacts outside of these areas and enhancing the support that these areas provide to nearby residents and businesses.

Guiding Objectives

Objective 1: Land use regulations tailored to address the unique opportunities of Mixed Use Areas will be developed to guide future development.

Objective 2: When adjacent to agricultural areas or natural resources, impacts from development will be minimized through transitional uses, edge treatments, and other appropriate measures.

Objective 3: Proposed subdivisions in Mixed Use Areas will be located on a case-by-case basis. Location guidelines will be established and used in the approval process for new rural subdivisions within Mixed Use Areas.



CHAPTER FOUR

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

While the *County Development Plan* looks forward and provides a “snapshot” of Story County in 2020, implementation of the Plan will occur in several gradual stages over time.

Target population and land needs analyses-both factors analyzed in developing the Land Use Framework-are not driving forces behind land use decision-making for the future. Rather, the timing of future development will depend on a number of factors including choices made by individual landowners and future availability of facilities and service and levels of infrastructure improvement.



Plan Evaluation and Review

Implementation of the *County Development Plan*, which begins with the adoption of the plan document, is an **ON-GOING, DAY-TO-DAY PROCESS**. The *County Development Plan* is a living document. Through land use ordinances, budgetary activities, and other legal and policy directives, the primary implementation tools for the plan are put in place. As the county changes and priorities shift, the plan and associated planning efforts will need to be adjusted. Thus, the planning process and the *County Development Plan* are “living” or dynamic in nature.



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The plan, by itself, does not bring about change except by identifying issues, articulating goals and objectives, defining directions and providing information regarding the future consequences of present actions. Implementation of the plan is directly connected to daily public and private decisions regarding the allocation of public and private resources and the need to coordinate the actions resulting from those decisions.

Ongoing feedback from Story County citizens is crucial in the continuous evaluation of the performance of the plan and refinement of its recommendations. Refinement activities, including the development of fringe area plans and special studies, the adoption of a detailed Master Transportation Plan and the use of community survey techniques provide a solid sense of direction for policy decision-makers in the public and private sectors. The utilization of feedback creates a plan responsive to needs of the county and one not stagnant while maintaining the comprehensive and careful study that should accompany plan amendments.

Periodic Evaluation and Review

To maintain the viability of the *County Development Plan* as a living document, annual review of both the content and use of the plan should occur. This review should occur to reinforce the vision and goals of Story County, address any changed or unforeseen developments in Story County, and check the progress made as a result of local decisions. Continual maintenance of databases, monitoring of issues, and follow-up on decisions made by the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and other public and semi-public organizations may assist in this annual review. The annual review should address established benchmarks and indicators

to analyze trends supportive of or contrary to the goals and vision of the *County Development Plan*.

Major evaluations of the plan should be scheduled on five-year intervals. Such an approach makes the plan a viable instrument, flexible and adaptable to unanticipated change. Major evaluations, in contrast to annual reviews, can alert citizens, elected officials, and County staff to any changes in the vision and goals.

Area and Project-Specific Evaluation and Review

Because the *County Development Plan* is a document to provide general policy-guidance for land use decisions, it is likely that some specific issues may not be addressed. This is particularly true with the Cooperative Planning designated on the plan. Development-specific areas, while having a secondary impact on the county as a whole, may have a need for a greater level of planning to address unique local needs and conditions. Planning for these specific areas may provide the level of comprehensive and careful analysis necessary, while maintaining the broad visions and goals expressed in this general *County Development Plan*. These area plans as developed should be adopted as amendments to this plan.

Similarly, due to the general nature of this plan, specific projects, while apparently desirable to the county as a whole, may not appear to be in technical compliance with the plan. Project-specific amendments to the plan, while not recommended, may be appropriate in certain circumstances if the project entails situations and circumstances not considered in the general plan. However, unlike project-specific land use approvals under regulations and ordinances, project-specific plan amendments must maintain a comprehensive and careful analysis of the effect on the county as a whole rather than on immediately adjacent land areas. In the event that the area or project-specific plan amendments are needed in the future, they should always remain consistent with the vision and goals expressed in the *County Development Plan*. Changes or additional input that could alter the overall direction of the

general plan should only occur after major evaluations or through new planning efforts.

Land Development Regulations

The system of land development regulations used by most communities today has evolved to provide particular protections to land owners-protection from nuisances, protection of property rights, and implementation of community comprehensive plans. Historically, zoning has been used as a means of providing property owners assurances against what neighboring property owners could do on their adjacent land. While common law provided protection to landowners through the court system, zoning was a way to provide landowners these assurances through a local administrative process without resorting to costly or time-consuming court cases.

State enabling laws authorizing local governments to implement land use regulations are mostly based on model planning and zoning acts from the 1920s. These systems contemplate zoning and subdivision regulations as a means of implementing plans, in addition to protection of property owners from nuisances and establishing property rights. In this system, subdivision regulations are a means of both ensuring marketable title to lands and providing the building blocks of growing communities through roads, block layouts, utility provisions, and lot divisions. Zoning is the mechanism upon which allowed uses are established and regulated.

Recommended Implementation Measures

To achieve the vision and goals, principles and guiding objectives of the *County Development Plan*, it is recommended that steps defined on the action plan be closely followed, including, but not limited to the following:

- completion of fringe area studies;
- development of Benchmark/Indicator Report upon which reviews of the *County Development Update* are based;

- development of a Master Transportation Plan; and
- development of land development regulations including, but not limited to:
 - a unified development code, combining the zoning ordinance with the subdivision regulations to clearly define the land use regulations for unincorporated Story County;
 - strategies for the identification and protection of natural resources and areas presenting constraints to development;
 - the incorporation of appropriate plans and policies into the established Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system so that this mechanism may continue to be used for agricultural land preservation; and
 - modifications to the development review process so that review by the Board of Supervisors is appropriately timed.

<i>Year 0</i>	<i>represents up to one year after adoption of plan</i>
<i>Year 1</i>	<i>begins one full year after adoption</i>
<i>Year 2</i>	<i>begins the second full year after adoption</i>
<i>Year 3</i>	<i>begins the third full year after adoption</i>
<i>Year 4</i>	<i>begins the fourth full year after adoption</i>
<i>Year 5</i>	<i>begins the fifth full year after adoption</i>

Action Plan

Major steps have been identified as crucial to the *County Development Plan* in furtherance of its vision and goals.

These steps are articulated on the following pages. For each of these steps, a timeframe and responsible party(ies) have been identified.

“Integral Participants” on the following table is not meant to indicate an all-inclusive list of individuals and groups potentially involved in achieving the action item. Furthermore, the term “public” encompasses both individuals and groups.

Story County Development Plan Action Plan

Action Item	Time Frame	Project Leader	Integral Participants
1.0 Complete and adopt land use regulations	Year 0	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Public Story County Interagency Review Team Natural Resource Conservation-Prairie Rivers RC&D
2.0 Complete Fringe Area Plan	Year 0	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	City Staffs Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors City Councils Public
3.0 Develop Fringe Area Agreements and Area- Specific Land Use Regulations (as appropriate)	Year 0	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	City Staff Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors City Councils Public
4.0 Develop Benchmarks and Indicators	Year 0	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Interagency Review Team
5.0 Annual Review of <i>County Development Plan</i>	Year 1	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Interagency Review Team

6.0 Complete Feasibility Study regarding the development of a farmland protection program	Year 2	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Farm Bureau Story County Extension Prairie Rivers RC&D NRCS Story County Soil and Water Conservation District
7.0 Complete comprehensive review of floodplain development policies in Story County (including communities)	Year 2	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Emergency Management Prairie River RC&D City Staffs City Councils Iowa Department of Natural Resources FEMA Story County Soil and Water Conservation District
8.0 Annual Review of <i>County Development Plan</i>	Year 2	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Interagency Review Team
9.0 Update <i>Natural Resources Analysis – Story County, Iowa (1975)</i>	Year 3	Story County Planning and Zoning Department Story County Conservation	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Emergency Management Prairie Rivers RC&D Iowa Department of Natural Resources Iowa State University Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation NRCS Story County Soil and Water Conservation District

10.0 Annual Review of <i>County Development Plan</i>	Year 3	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Interagency Review Team
11.0 Complete Master Transportation Plan	Year 3-4	Story County Planning and Zoning Department Story County Engineer's Office	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Public City Staffs City Councils Iowa Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration
12.0 Annual Review of <i>County Development Plan</i>	Year 4	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Interagency Review Team
13.0 Comprehensive Review (Five Year) of the <i>County Development Plan</i>	Year 5	Story County Planning and Zoning Department	Story County Planning and Zoning Commission Story County Board of Supervisors Story County Interagency Review Team City Staffs City Councils Public